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WHY SEO BELONGS TO CONTENT KINGS

HOW TO MAXIMISE ROI FROM CURRENT MARKETING INVESTMENTS TO RULE SEARCH ENGINES

INTRODUCTION: WHY CONTENT MARKETERS SHOULD OWN SEO

In the new age of marketing transparency, content marketers are under the microscope – measured on everything from the number of inbound leads they generate, to the proportion that convert into sales.

As a content marketer, anything you can do to improve your batting average is a good thing, for your company and for your career. One sure way to boost your performance is to excel at search engine optimisation, since search traffic is engaged and comes ripe for commerce.

But SEO hasn't traditionally been a core skill of the content marketer. It's usually been done by hired "SEO ninjas", using all manner of arcane techniques to improve rankings and drive traffic.



That's all changing, though, with the convergence of three trends:

- Search engine algorithms are swinging away from rewarding SEO dark arts towards decent, relevant, original content: the sort that marketers are great at producing. Google's 2011 Panda update was the turning point, and the trend is continuing today.

- Content marketing is on the rise as marketers experience the power of intelligent, useful and relevant content to generate awareness, leads and conversions.

- SEO is increasingly automated – and with smart new tools that optimise your page content as you go, who needs expensive SEO specialists?



This ebook is for content marketers who'd like to add SEO to their skillset but haven't yet done so because:

- It's been too nebulous and technical to grasp
- The choice of tools has been too confusing
- Measurement is difficult to achieve
- It's seemed tacky, a bit like anti-copywriting
- There's no time to learn the skills and keep up with constant changes

Well, good news. With SEO becoming increasingly synonymous with smart, relevant, original content, you'll find it's all these issues are swinging in your favour.



This ebook will show how you can start optimising your content for search yourself – without big additions to your team or budget.

WHY SEO NOW?

You're a savvy marketer (you're reading this for a start), so you'll already be usingcontent to attract and entice prospective buyers. Inbound marketing is in a boom phase, because its benefits are obvious and well documented. For example:

- It costs **$135** on average to acquire a new inbound lead, compared with $346 for outbound
- Sites with 40+ landing pages generate **10x more leads** than those with five or fewer
- Businesses with 200+ blog posts generate **3.5x more leads** than those with less than 20
- **15% of search traffic leads convert to sales**, compared with 2% for outbound marketing

(Figures from data sourced by G+, March 2012)

The message couldn't be clearer: content increases leads, it increases sales, and it massively lowers the cost of both of those things. But not just any old content – it's content that's findable. It has to rank highly in search results for things your prospects are searching for. And with 93% of business purchases now starting with an online search, there's every reason to get your content optimised to the hilt. (Figure from Enquiro Research)

So what's different about SEO now, and why is it time for marketers to get on board? Let's have a closer look at the three trends driving these changes forward. 1. The panda effect, 2. The irresistible rise of content marketing, 3. SEO automation.

1. THE PANDA EFFECT

Google has always wanted its search results to contain information that's genuine, useful and relevant to the person searching. Almost all of the regular tweaks it makes to its algorithms are made with this goal in mind.

The aim of its 2011 Panda update – and other subsequent changes – was to combat the rise of pages with poor quality content. These pages typically contain lots of relevant keywords and backlinks from other poor sites, but lack substance and originality, and rarely meet needs of the searcher.



Google™

To prevent shallow content from ranking above genuinely useful and relevant content, Google is on a mission to separate the content wheat from the chaff. The algorithm now favours content that tests positively against questions like:

- Would you trust the information presented in this article?
- Has a genuine topic expert or enthusiast written the piece?
- Are the topics driven by genuine reader interest?
- Does the article provide original content, information, reporting, research, or analysis?
- Does the page provide substantial value when compared to other pages in search results?
- Was the article edited well?
- Is this the sort of page you'd want to bookmark, share with a friend, or recommend?

If your immediate thought is: "Yes! I produce content like that every day!" - the good news is you're already a bit of an SEO wizard in the post-Panda world. Google is well disposed towards you, and prone to rewarding the care and attention you take over your marketing content.

The even better news is that the balance is going to swing even further in your favour, as Google becomes increasingly resistant to attempts to "game" its algorithm with strategically-positioned keywords and other classic SEO tricks. Increasingly, **content marketers are set to be the new kings of search.**

2. THE IRRESISTIBLE RISE OF CONTENT MARKETING

So Google now rewards great content, and that's great news for marketers. Because search traffic is simply trackable and measurable, you can finally prove beyond doubt the value of your content.

You can say with certainty that blog post brought 8,000 visitors, 300 sales and £3200 in revenue (if you're joined at the hip with your analytics package).

A marketer's pipe dream has become hard-nosed reality, with huge economies of scale ripe to be harvested. The best content can be re-used, re-purposed, edited, extended, collated and distributed all over the internet for people to find, enjoy, share, rate and review. And it all delivers backlinks and, in their wake, leads.

It's just one reason why content marketing is experiencing a huge boom in popularity.
Google + found that 54% of marketers are planning to increase their focus on inbound marketing in 2012 because of "past success" with it.

60% of marketers plan to increase their content marketing budget in 2012

Content Marketing Institute, B2B Content Marketing: 2012 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends

What's this got to do with SEO? Two things:

1. Search marketing is the flipside of content marketing – if your content can't be easily found, it's not going to bring you many leads.

2. As inbound-mad marketers fill up the web with shiny new content, you have to convince Google (and the other search engines, including those inside social media platforms) that it's higher quality than everyone else's.

All the more reason for you to get your SEO skills honed sooner rather than later. And with Google's new focus on high-quality content, you're part-way there already.

But what about all the other SEO stuff you never quite got your head round? All those keywords, and <h1> headings, and metatags? Well, there's even more good news here, because our third key trend means you don't have to know or worry very much about those any more.

3. SEO AUTOMATION

In the old days of the web, every page on your site had to be coded by hand in HTML. Then along came content management systems (a thing we know about) and the need for coding skills to create great web pages dropped.

Today, the same thing is happening with SEO. The old days of manually appending tags and metadata to each post are fading away. Now there are some great tools that automate most of the SEO process for you (it's another thing we know about).

Today, it's possible to start writing a page or blog post in your CMS, and use embedded tools to: **Organise your tags** and select the best ones for the page at hand, **manage keywords** and select the most appropriate ones for the content you're writing, **monitor the likely SEO impact** of what you're writing and suggest improvements, **estimate search traffic** to the page and make recommendations for improving its SEO.



Maximising ROI

Marketing teams have historically struggled to get keyphrase audit results into content output. Pooling keyword suggestions with content production bridges the gap between analysis and output to enable maximum ROI. It's a crucial step.

The best SEO automation tools drive ROI with three main features:



SEO as you go: Introducing SiteAttention for EPiServer

At EPiServer we're always looking for ways to help our customers create better-performing online content. The SEO automation tool we offer with our CMS, Site Attention, has been a firm favourite with SEO professionals, but we wanted to make it easier and more useful for content marketers too.

The latest version of SiteAttention for EPiServer is packed with features that make it easy for busy content marketers and content managers to ensure powerful SEO as you go, including:

- Organise keyphrase categories in one place, for everyone to use
- Add new keyphrases and share them with your editors
- Monitor the likely SEO impact of your copy as you type
- Get suggestions for more powerful keywords and phrases to use
- Measure your content's SEO performance against your KPIs – and make changes if needed

SiteAttention for EPiServer is available in Basic and Premium versions.
Read more and try it out at www.episerver.com/seo



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We look forward to hearing from you.



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EPiServer is the leading supplier of solutions that enable true web engagement and drive business results for end customers. Over 4,000 customers worldwide use EPiServer's technology platform that combines content, community, commerce and communications with a configurable metrics dashboard.

EPiServer CMS is the foundation for more than 20,000 websites and is used by more than 130,000 web editors daily. The EPiServer platform is delivered through an extensive network of over 500 partner companies in 30 countries.

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